

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 029787

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INFO KARACHI PEKING SEOUL 10 FEBRUARY.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 029787

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, EEWT, ESTC, PK, KN

SUBJECT:NUR KHAN DISCUSSES PIA OPERATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA

REF: KARACHI 184

1. AIR MARSHALL NUR KHAN, CHAIRMAN OF PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES (PIA), AND MUMTAZ KHAN, PIA DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, DISCUSSED PENDING PIA PLANS RE NORTH KOREA WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS FEB 6. PRESENTATION WAS AT NUR KHAN'S REQUEST, CONVEYED THROUGH PIA'S U.S. ATTORNEYS, AND COVERED ALREADY-REPORTED PLANS OPERATE TO PYONGYANG (REFTEL) AND POSSIBLE INTEREST IN CHARTER, WET-LEASE, OR OTHER ARRANGEMENTS TO MAKE AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE TO DPRK CARRIER FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS.

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PAGE 02 STATE 029787

2. PIA HOPES TO INAUGURATE PEKING-PYONGYANG-TOKYO SERVICE BY APRIL 1975. NUR KHAN SAID THAT DECISION TO ESTABLISH OPERATIONS WAS NOT A POLITICAL MATTER, BUT INSTEAD WAS SEEN BY PIA AS A STRICTLY COMMERCIAL QUESTION. NONETHELESS, AS WITH POSSIBLE LEASE OR CHARTER (SEE BELOW), PIA WOULD NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD CONTRAVENE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND THE U.S. MAINTENANCE OF PIA-OWNED SPARES AND STATIONING OF GROUND EQUIPMENT AT PYONGYANG COULD, HE FELT, BE ARRANGED AS THEY HAD BEEN IN CONNECTION WITH PIA'S OPENING OF SERVICE TO PRC IN LATE SIXTIES. HE STRESSED COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY REPRESENTED

BY PYONGYANG SERVICE (INCLUDING SAVING 1 1/2 HOURS ON PEKING-TOKYO FLIGHTS ROUTED OVER NORTH KOREA), AND NOTED DPRK'S FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE--ALLOWING PIA TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN PYONGYANG-TOKYO COMMUNICATIONS LINK, ETC.

3. IN CONNECTION NUR KHAN'S VISIT, DEPARTMENT HAD HEARD FROM BOTH BOEING AND MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS THAT PIA WAS INTERESTED IN SOME ARRANGEMENT MAKE AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE TO DPRK. (LATTER FIRM EVEN BELIEVED PIA WISHED RE-SELL ITS 3 DC-10'S TO DPRK.) NUR KHAN SAID LATEST PIA THINKING INVOLVED SOME FORM OF CHARTER ARRANGEMENTS, USING PIA AIRCREW, WITH POSSIBILITY OF TRAINING FOR KOREAN TECHNICIANS, AND OTHER FACILITATIVE SERVICES PROVIDED BY PIA. HE NOTED PIA HAD DEVELOPED SPECIAL EXPERTISE AT SUCH THIRD-COUNTRY OPERATIONS IN RECENT YEARS.

4. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING INFORMAL BASIS OF DISCUSSION, DEPARTMENT OFFICERS POINTED OUT PROPOSED PIA-DPRK ARRANGEMENTS WOULD CAUSE SERIOUS POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES SINCE USG COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO U.S. GOODS OR SERVICES GOING TO BENEFIT OF DPRK. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN USG POLICY ON NORTH KOREA. OUR STRATEGIC-TRADE LEGISLATION DOES NOT PERMIT LEASE OR OTHER INTERMEDIARY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH SEEK EVADE INTENT OF TRADE EMBARGO AGAINST NORTH KOREA. WE RECOGNIZED THIS WAS NOT OFFICIAL GOP INQUIRY AND INDICATED THAT A FORMAL USG RESPONSE COULD ONLY BE MADE IF GOP WISHES TO PURSUE THESE PROPOSALS DIRECTLY.

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PAGE 03 STATE 029787

5. NUR KHAN SAID HE THOUGHT GOP APPROACH WOULD BE MADE IN DUE COURSE, PROBABLY VIA PAK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. HE AGAIN STRESSED INTENT NOT ALLOW THESE MATTERS DISTURB PAK-U.S. RELATIONS, BUT OBSERVED THAT PIA WISHED AVAIL ITSELF OF EXCELLENT COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY. INGEROLL UNQUOTE

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